



Guide To Making Public Comments

Why is commenting important?

Each person has an important perspective on the management of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) and can make a unique contribution to the planning process that will help the National Park Service produce better planning documents.

Although park planners and resource managers often have very specialized knowledge of an area, it would be impossible for them to know all the issues of importance to all of the visitors to that area. This information needs to come from the visitors themselves. Park plans are more thorough because of the members of the public who have chosen to participate in them. Public scrutiny of proposed actions helps to ensure that these actions are consistent with the National Park Service mission, enabling legislation, and other relevant laws and policies. *One comment can make a difference.*

The type of comment that is most useful in evaluating a plan or project depends on how far along it is in the planning process. GGNRA project teams solicit comments during what is referred to as scoping, as well as upon release of a draft document. The public is also encouraged to send in general comments for consideration by park staff at any time.

Scoping Comments

The primary goal of scoping for a project is to determine the range of issues and alternatives to be addressed. At the time of scoping, the park provides a description of the project proposal, including a statement of the purpose of and need for the project and a list of project goals. The public is asked to submit comments, concerns, and suggestions relating to these goals.

Public comments made during scoping directly inform draft plans. Park staff continually review your comments as they work to define the scope of what the plan will cover and to develop alternatives to address the issues. The most useful types of scoping comments consider the following:

- Alternative approaches and ideas for accomplishing project goals
- The range of environmental and socioeconomic issues that need to be considered
- Other potential projects that might affect or be affected by this project
- Information that needs to be considered (such as related research) and why
- Information on how you use the park and how a project might affect that use

And answer these types of questions:

- What do you love about the Golden Gate National Recreation Area?
- What do you do while you are there?
- What would you like to see protected?
- What kind of services or facilities would you like to see offered, improved, or removed?

Comments on Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements

When a draft environmental assessment or environmental impact statement is released, the public has the opportunity to examine sets of proposals (known as “alternatives”) and to submit comments on these proposals. These comments are analyzed and often contribute to revisions in the final plan. Ideally, comments on a draft assess the adequacy of the document in disclosing and evaluating a project’s effects on the environment.

These comments are most useful if they are as specific as possible and do the following:

- Discuss a particular plan element or alternative
- Identify incomplete or incorrect information
- Offer reasons why a particular alternative or plan element would or would not work
- Offer a reasonable, new plan element or completely new alternative that could help accomplish the stated goals
- Point out discrepancies between legal mandates and proposals
- Highlight deficiencies in the analysis of environmental consequences
- Provide information on how you use the park and how particular proposals in the planning document would affect that use

General Comments

Even outside of a formal planning process, park staff would like to hear your thoughts and ideas relating to planning and management issues affecting the GGNRA. All comments received will be read and directed to the appropriate division in the park.

The most useful comments include:

- Your concerns about conditions or activities in the park and possible solutions
- How the National Park Service is accomplishing its mission in the GGNRA
- The clarity of proposed project descriptions, their purpose and need
- The overall quality of your visit to the park

How to Stay Involved

Public participation is critical to management and planning in the GGNRA. Here are some ways to stay involved:

- Review draft plans, final plans, press releases, and plan updates on the park’s web site. The status of GGNRA projects will be updated as needed.
- Add your name to the park’s mailing list (to address/fax/email below) to receive planning- related notices.
- Request copies of planning documents.
- Visit the park and talk with park staff.
- Submit comments!
- Visit the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov>

Submitting Comments

All comments must be submitted in writing and will be accepted in the following ways:

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| By mail: | Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Attn: Division of Planning and Technical Services
Fort Mason, Building 201
San Francisco, CA 94123 |
| By fax: | (415) 561- 4854 |
| By email | GOGA_Planning@nps.gov |
| Online: | http://parkplanning.nps.gov/goga |